

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 22, 2000

**LARSON CALLS ON PRESIDENT TO PROVIDE ENERGY ASSISTANCE
TO NEW ENGLAND**

***Urges Release of Home Heating Oil and \$300 Million in Additional
LIHEAP Funding***

WASHINGTON, D.C.-U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today joined with 103 members of Congress to send a letter to President Clinton urging him to provide additional energy relief to the Northeast. Members of Congress are urging the President to release \$300 million in non-emergency LIHEAP funding that was included in the recently passed Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (HR 4577) as soon as possible. The letter also urges the release of heating oil from the recently established Strategic Home Heating Oil Reserve.

On Monday, December 18, President Clinton released \$156 million in emergency LIHEAP funding nation-wide, exhausting the emergency funding made available in FY2000. Connecticut received \$3.4 million for LIHEAP from this release. However, additional relief is still needed and projections are still causing concern. The overall supply of heating oil throughout the country is 24 million barrels below last year's level, and 59 percent lower than two years ago in New England, while distillate fuel stocks continue to fall.

"We must act to end rising fuel costs. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are things all Americans value - but not very tangible to those in need and left out in the cold, especially during the holiday season," said Larson. "We worked bipartisanly in Congress this year to provide mechanisms for economic relief this winter, and I urge the President to take

full advantage of them."

While Larson recognizes that these important relief efforts are meant to deal with the short-term problem, he remains hard at work on initiatives to address America's long-term energy problems and reliance on foreign oil. "We must continue to look at long-term solutions to our energy problems, such as the development of fuel cells, if we are going to break free from this cycle of rising energy costs and reliance on energy sources from foreign countries," Larson said. "I hope that Congress and the new President will consider some of my energy proposals, such as HR 5585, designed to make the United States independent of foreign energy sources by the year 2010."

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